

[REDACTED]

November 21, 1989

Special Analysis

USSR:

Assessing Unilateral Reductions Announced Year Ago

The first phase of the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe and Mongolia—part of the unilateral reductions President Gorbachev announced last December—is nearly complete. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] *Moscow also is restructuring divisions in the forward area and the USSR; the observed pace of this activity has been slower in the USSR.* [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Defensive Restructuring

Concurrently, Moscow is restructuring its residual forces in the forward area and at least some divisions in the USSR to what it describes as a more defensive posture. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] *Tank divisions* are being restructured from three tank regiments and one motorized rifle regiment to two tank and two motorized rifle regiments, cutting 69 tanks—or 22 percent of their original holdings—in most divisions. *Motorized rifle divisions* are having their one tank regiment converted to a fourth motorized rifle regiment and are losing tanks from other divisional elements. [REDACTED]

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These changes reduce the number of tanks per division by 116 in most Soviet divisions in Eastern Europe and by 65 in the USSR—43 and 30 percent of their original holdings, respectively. Some personnel and most armored troop carriers and artillery from the units being withdrawn are being used to meet the expanded needs of restructured divisions remaining in Eastern Europe, and additional artillery and armored troop carriers have arrived from the USSR.

[REDACTED]

Soviet tactical Air Forces also are being restructured. The longstanding predominance of ground attack over fighter regiments in East Germany is giving way to a more balanced force. The fighter component also is being modernized rapidly with MiG-29s (Fulcrum) from units in the western USSR, leaving the Air Forces there dominated by ground attack regiments. Most of the aircraft reductions are being accomplished by taking 10 aircraft from each regiment. The most modern of the displaced aircraft are going to modernize regiments with older equipment, and the old aircraft are leaving active service.

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Elimination of Equipment

Although Moscow has said it would destroy or convert much of the equipment it withdraws from abroad or removes from units inside the USSR—a massive undertaking—there is evidence on the destruction of only about 200 older tanks. Press reports say that a Swedish metallurgical firm may import as much as 50,000 tons of Soviet scrap steel from dismantled tanks, the equivalent of about 1,250 tanks, according to US Army estimates.

[REDACTED]

The 1990 phase of Moscow's unilateral reductions probably will begin next spring with the resumption of withdrawals from Eastern Europe and Mongolia. The Soviets may implement more unilateral withdrawals after 1990.

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